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PUERTO RICO STATUS ACT

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1519, I call up the bill (H.R. 8393) to enable the people of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of that permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing political status, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. FLETCHER). Pursuant to House Resolution 1519, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117-74 is agreed to and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8393

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Puerto Rico Status Act”.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

In recognition of the inherent limitations of Puerto Rico’s territorial status, and the responsibility of the Federal Government to enable the people of the territory to freely express their wishes regarding political status and achieve full self-government, Congress seeks to enable the eligible voters of Puerto Rico to choose a permanent, non-territorial, fully self-governing political status for Puerto Rico and to provide for a transition to and the implementation of said permanent, nonterritorial, fully self-governing status.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **BILATERAL NEGOTIATING COMMISSION.**—The term “Bilateral Negotiating Commission” means the Bilateral Negotiating Commission established under section 209(a).

(2) **ELECTIONS COMMISSION.**—The term “Elections Commission” means the Puerto Rico State Elections Commission (Comisión Estatal de Elecciones de Puerto Rico, in Spanish).

(3) **ELIGIBLE VOTERS.**—The term “eligible voters” means bona fide residents of Puerto Rico who are otherwise qualified to vote in general elections in Puerto Rico.

(4) **INITIAL PLEBISCITE.**—The term “initial plebiscite” means the plebiscite required by section 5(a)(1).

(5) **MAJORITY.**—The term “majority” means more than 50 percent.

(6) **RUNOFF PLEBISCITE.**—The term “runoff plebiscite” means the plebiscite required by section 5(a)(4).

SEC. 5. PLEBISCITE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

(1) **INITIAL PLEBISCITE.**—A plebiscite to resolve Puerto Rico’s political status shall be held on November 5, 2023.

(2) **OPTIONS.**—The plebiscite held under paragraph (1) shall offer eligible voters a choice of one of the three options which shall be presented on the ballot as follows:

(A) Independence.

(B) Sovereignty in Free Association with the United States.

(C) Statehood.

(3) **MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.**—Approval of a status option must be by a majority of the valid votes cast.

(4) **RUNOFF PLEBISCITE.**—If there is not a majority in favor of one of the three options defined in this Act, then a runoff plebiscite shall be held on March 3, 2024, which shall offer eligible voters a choice of the two options that received the most votes in the plebiscite held under paragraph (1).

(b) **BALLOT LANGUAGE.**—A ballot for a plebiscite required by subsection (a) shall include the following language, except that the ballot for the runoff plebiscite shall omit the option that received the fewest votes in the initial plebiscite:

(1) **INSTRUCTIONS.**—Mark the status option you choose as each is defined below. A ballot with more than 1 option marked will not be counted. A ballot with no option marked will not be counted.

(2) **INDEPENDENCE.**—If you agree, mark here

—(A) Puerto Rico is a sovereign nation that has full authority and responsibility over its territory and population under a constitution of its own adoption which shall be the supreme law of the nation.

(B) Puerto Rico is vested with full powers and responsibilities consistent with the rights and responsibilities that devolve upon a sovereign nation under international law, including its own fiscal and monetary policy, immigration, trade, and the conduct in its own name and right of relations with other nations and international organizations.

(C) Puerto Rico has full authority and responsibility over its citizenship and immigration laws, and birth in Puerto Rico or relationship to persons with statutory United States citizenship by birth in the former territory shall cease to be a basis for United States nationality or citizenship, except that persons who have such United States citizenship have a right to retain United States nationality and citizenship for life, by entitlement or election as provided by Federal law.

(D) Puerto Rico will no longer be a possession of the United States for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. In general, United States citizens and United States businesses in the nation of Puerto Rico will be subject to United States Federal tax laws (as is the case with any other United States citizen or United States business abroad) and to Puerto Rican tax laws. Puerto Rico’s status as an independent, sovereign nation will be the controlling factor in the taxation of Puerto Rican taxpayers.

(E) The Constitution and laws of the United States no longer apply in Puerto Rico and United States sovereignty in Puerto Rico is ended.

(3) **SOVEREIGNTY IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.**—If you agree, mark here

—(A) Puerto Rico is a sovereign nation that has full authority and responsibility over its territory and population under a constitution of its own adoption which shall be the supreme law of the nation.

(B) Puerto Rico is vested with full powers and responsibilities consistent with the rights and responsibilities that devolve upon a sovereign nation under international law, including its own fiscal and monetary policy, immigration, trade, and the conduct in its own name and right of relations with other nations and international organizations, except as otherwise provided for in the Articles of Free Association to be negotiated by Puerto Rico and the United States.

(C) Puerto Rico has full authority and responsibility over its citizenship and immigration laws, and persons who have United States citizenship have a right to retain United States nationality and citizenship for life by entitlement or election as provided by Federal law.

(D) Birth in Puerto Rico shall cease to be a basis for United States nationality or citizenship. Individuals born in Puerto Rico to at least one parent who is a citizen of the United States shall be United States citizens at birth, consistent with the immigration laws of the United States, for the duration of the first agreement of the Articles of Free Association.

(E) Puerto Rico enters into Articles of Free Association with the United States, with such devolution and reservation of governmental functions and other bilateral arrangements as

may be agreed to by both Parties under the Articles, which shall be terminable at will by either the United States or Puerto Rico at any time.

(F) Puerto Rico will no longer be a possession of the United States for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. In general, United States citizens and United States businesses in the nation of Puerto Rico will be subject to United States Federal tax laws (as is the case with any other United States citizen or United States business abroad) and to Puerto Rican tax laws. Puerto Rico's status as an independent, sovereign nation will be the controlling factor in the taxation of Puerto Rican taxpayers. In addition, Puerto Rico will enter into an agreement with the United States to provide for "Sovereignty in Free Association" between the two nations. This agreement may modify the otherwise applicable tax rules, subject to negotiation and ratification by the two nations.

(G) The Constitution of the United States no longer applies in Puerto Rico, the laws of the United States no longer apply in Puerto Rico except as otherwise provided in the Articles of Free Association, and United States sovereignty in Puerto Rico is ended.

(H) All matters pertaining to the government-to-government relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, which may include foreign affairs, trade, finance, taxation, currency, economic assistance, security and defense, dispute resolution and termination, shall be provided for in the Articles of Free Association.

(4) STATEHOOD.—If you agree, mark here

(A) The State of Puerto Rico is admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the other States in all respects whatever and is a part of the permanent union of the United States of America, subject to the United States Constitution, with powers not prohibited by the Constitution to the States and reserved to the State of Puerto Rico or to its residents.

(B) The residents of Puerto Rico are fully self-governing with their rights secured under the United States Constitution, which shall be fully applicable in Puerto Rico and which, with the laws and treaties of the United States, is the supreme law and has the same force and effect in Puerto Rico as in the other States of the Union.

(C) United States citizenship of those born in Puerto Rico is recognized, protected, and secured under the United States Constitution in the same way such citizenship is for all United States citizens born in the other States.

(D) Puerto Rico will no longer be a possession of the United States for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. Instead, the State of Puerto Rico will become a State on equal footing with each of the current 50 States in the United States of America. Individuals and businesses resident in the State of Puerto Rico will be subject to United States Federal tax laws as well as applicable State tax laws.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF PLEBISCITE.—The plebiscites authorized by this section shall be implemented by the Elections Commission, consistent with the laws of Puerto Rico and Federal law.

(d) RESULTS.—The Elections Commission shall inform the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources of—

(1) the results of the initial plebiscite not later than 30 calendar days after the initial plebiscite is held; and

(2) the results of the runoff plebiscite, if held, not later than 30 calendar days after the runoff plebiscite is held.

(e) JURISDICTION OF DISTRICT COURT.—The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction of any civil action alleging a dispute or controversy pertaining to electoral processes conducted under this section.

SEC. 6. NONPARTISAN VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Elections Commission shall carry out a nonpartisan voter education campaign through traditional paid media and make available at all voting locations voter education materials related to the plebiscites authorized under this Act consistent with Department of Justice approval under section 7.

(b) VOTER EDUCATION MATERIALS.—At a minimum, the voter education materials shall address for each option—

- (1) international representation;
- (2) citizenship and immigration; and
- (3) access and treatment under Federal law and programs.

SEC. 7. OVERSIGHT.

(a) SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Elections Commission shall submit the ballot design and voter education materials for the plebiscites authorized under this Act to the United States Attorney General for review and the Elections Commission shall make not more than one submission of the ballot design and voter education materials to the Attorney General for review.

(b) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO COMPLY.—If the Attorney General fails to comply with subsection (c) within the 45-day period, the ballot design and voter education materials shall be considered approved.

(c) REVIEW.—Not later than 45 days after receiving the ballot design and voter education materials under subsection (a), the Attorney General shall review the ballot design and voter education materials to ensure consistency with this Act and to ensure that the three options defined in this Act are represented fairly, especially in the event that any of the three options are not represented on the Elections Commission by a member of a political party that supports such option, and—

(1) return the materials to the Elections Commission with comments and instructions for changes; or

(2) before the expiration of the 45-day period, inform the Elections Commission that no instructions or requests for changes shall be made under paragraph (1), but that the Attorney General reserves the right to submit instructions for changes in accordance with this section if additional information comes to the attention of the Attorney General during the remainder of the 45-day period.

(d) REVISION.—Not later than 45 days after receiving comments and instructions for changes from the Attorney General under subsection (c), the Elections Commission shall revise the ballot design and voter education materials as requested by the Attorney General.

(e) ELECTION OBSERVERS.—The Elections Commission shall invite national and international election observers to ensure transparency and confidence in the electoral process. Observers shall be present during the initial plebiscite vote and during the runoff plebiscite vote.

SEC. 8. FUNDS FOR VOTER EDUCATION; PLEBISCITES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary for the Elections Commission to carry out a nonpartisan voter education campaign and an initial plebiscite and, if necessary, a runoff plebiscite under this Act.

(b) EXISTING FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any provision of Public Law 113-76, funds made available under such Act to carry out a plebiscite on Puerto Rico's status shall be made available to carry out this Act.

SEC. 9. BILINGUAL VOTER EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND BALLOTS.

All voter educational materials and ballots used to carry out this Act shall be made available in English and Spanish.

SEC. 10. PUERTO RICO OVERSIGHT, MANAGEMENT, AND ECONOMIC STABILITY ACT.

Upon the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union or on the date that the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico initially takes office:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (48 U.S.C. 2101 et seq.) shall no longer apply to the State of Puerto Rico or the nation of Puerto Rico, as the case may be.

(2) OVERSIGHT BOARD.—The Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico established under section 101(b)(1) of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (48 U.S.C. 2121(b)(1)) is terminated and all duties and responsibilities assigned to the Oversight Board shall return to the State of Puerto Rico or the nation of Puerto Rico, as the case may be.

(3) TRANSFER.—All funds, property, and assets of the board described in subparagraph (B) shall be transferred to the State of Puerto Rico or the nation of Puerto Rico, as the case may be.

SEC. 11. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid by a court of jurisdiction, the validity of the remainder of the Act and of the application of any such provision, section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

TITLE I—TRANSITION AND

IMPLEMENTATION — INDEPENDENCE

SEC. 101. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

(a) ELECTION OF DELEGATES.—Not later than 6 months after the effective date of certification of a plebiscite result under this Act in favor of independence, the legislature of Puerto Rico shall provide for the election of delegates to a constitutional Convention to formulate and draft a Constitution for the nation of Puerto Rico.

(b) ELIGIBLE VOTERS.—All eligible voters may vote in the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention.

(c) GENERAL APPLICABILITY OF ELECTORAL LAW.—The laws of the territory of Puerto Rico relating to the electoral process shall apply to a special election held under this Act.

(d) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 3 months after the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention, the elected delegates shall meet at such time and place as the legislature of Puerto Rico shall determine. The initial meeting shall constitute the establishment of the constitutional Convention.

SEC. 102. CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The constitutional Convention under section 101 shall formulate and draft a Constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights, including—

(1) due process and equal protection under the law;

(2) freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion;

(3) the rights of the accused;

(4) any other economic, social, and cultural rights as the constitutional Convention may deem appropriate and necessary; and

(5) provisions to ensure that no individual born in the nation of Puerto Rico shall be stateless at birth.

SEC. 103. SUBMISSION; RATIFICATION.

(a) SUBMISSION.—Not later than one year after the establishment of the constitutional Convention, the Constitution formulated and drafted by the constitutional Convention shall be submitted to the eligible voters of Puerto Rico for ratification or rejection in a special election.

(b) MANNER OF ELECTION.—The special election held under this subsection shall be held in the manner prescribed by the legislature of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 104. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than one month after the ratification of the Constitution under section 103, the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall issue a proclamation calling for the election of such officers of the nation of Puerto Rico as may be required by the ratified Constitution.

(b) *REJECTION.*—If the special election results in rejection of the Constitution, the process provided for in sections 101 through 103 shall be repeated, except that section 101(a) shall be applied by substituting—

(1) “the special election” for “a plebiscite”;

(2) “rejecting of the Constitution” for “in favor of independence”.

(c) *DEADLINE; PROCEDURES.*—The election under subsection (a) shall be held—

(1) not later than 6 months after the date of ratification of the Constitution; and

(2) in accordance with the procedures and requirements established in the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(d) *CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS.*—Not later than 10 days after the election of officers under subsection (a), the Elections Commission shall certify the results of the election. The Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall inform the results of the election to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 105. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAW.

(a) *REVIEW.*—Not later than 30 days after the initial meeting of a constitutional Convention under section 101(d), the President shall initiate a review of Federal law with respect to Puerto Rico, including those regarding—

(1) taxation of persons and businesses;

(2) health care;

(3) housing;

(4) transportation;

(5) education; and

(6) entitlement programs.

(b) *RECOMMENDATIONS.*—Not later than one year after the date on which the President initiates a review under subsection (a), the President shall submit recommendations to Congress for changes to Federal law identified during such review, as the President deems appropriate.

SEC. 106. JOINT TRANSITION COMMISSION.

(a) *APPOINTMENT.*—Not later than 3 months after the establishment of a constitutional Convention under section 101(d), a Joint Transition Commission shall be appointed in equal numbers by the President of the United States and the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico.

(b) *DUTIES.*—The Joint Transition Commission shall be responsible for expediting the orderly transfer of all functions currently exercised by the Federal Government in Puerto Rico, or in relation to Puerto Rico to the nation of Puerto Rico, and shall recommend to Congress any appropriate legislation to carry out such transfer.

(c) *COLLABORATION.*—The Government of the territory of Puerto Rico and the agencies of the Government of the United States shall collaborate with the Joint Transition Commission and subsequently the officers of the nation of Puerto Rico, to provide for the orderly transfer of the functions under subsection (b).

SEC. 107. PROCLAMATIONS BY PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; HEAD OF STATE OF PUERTO RICO.

(a) *PROCLAMATION.*—Not later than one month after the official certification of the elected officers of the nation of Puerto Rico under section 104(d), the President of the United States shall by proclamation—

(1) withdraw and surrender all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control, or

sovereignty then existing and exercised by the United States over the territory and residents of Puerto Rico;

(2) recognize, on behalf of the United States of America, the independence of the nation of Puerto Rico and the authority of the government instituted by eligible voters of Puerto Rico under the Constitution of their own adoption; and

(3) state that the effective date of withdrawal of the sovereignty of the United States and recognition of independence shall be the same as the date of the proclamation.

(b) *COPY OF PROCLAMATION FORWARDED.*—The President of the United States shall forward a copy of the proclamation issued under subsection (a) not later than one week after signature to the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico, the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

(c) *DATE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OFFICE.*—Not later than one week after the date of receipt of the Presidential proclamation and with the advice of the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the presiding officer of the constitutional Convention shall determine the date on which the Government of the nation shall take office, and shall so notify the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico, the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 108. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS.

Upon the proclamation of independence as provided in this title, and except as otherwise provided in this title or in any separate agreements thereafter concluded between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico—

(1) all property, rights and interests which the United States may have acquired over Puerto Rico by virtue of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, and thereafter by cession, purchase, or eminent domain, with the exception of such land and other property, rights, or interests as may have been sold or otherwise legally disposed of prior to the proclamation of Independence, shall vest ipso facto in the nation of Puerto Rico; and

(2) except as provided in section 110, all laws of the United States applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico immediately prior to the proclamation of Independence shall no longer apply in the nation of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 109. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) *JUDGMENTS BEFORE PROCLAMATION.*—The nation of Puerto Rico shall recognize and give effect to all orders and judgments rendered by United States or territorial courts before the date of the proclamation of independence pursuant to the laws of the United States then applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico.

(b) *CONTINUITY OF PENDING PROCEEDINGS.*—All judicial proceedings pending in the courts of the territory of Puerto Rico on the day of the proclamation of independence shall be continued in the corresponding courts under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(c) *TRANSFER OF JUDICIAL POWER.*—Upon the proclamation of independence, the judicial power of the United States shall no longer extend to Puerto Rico. All proceedings pending in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall be transferred to the corresponding Puerto Rican courts of competence or other competent judicial authority under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico for disposition in conformity with laws applicable at the time when the controversy in process arose. All proceedings pending in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, or in the Supreme Court of the United States, that initiated in, or that could have been initiated in,

the courts of the territory or in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall continue until their final disposition and shall be submitted to the competent authority of the nation of Puerto Rico for proper execution: Provided, That neither the United States nor any of its officers is a party, in which case any final judgment shall be properly executed by the competent authority of the United States.

SEC. 110. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION LAWS AFTER PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—

(1) *PUERTO RICAN NATIONALITY.*—After the effective date of independence, the citizenship status of each individual born in Puerto Rico shall be determined in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(2) *UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION LAWS.*—Except as described in this section, after the effective date of independence citizens of Puerto Rico seeking to enter into the United States or obtain citizenship in the United States shall be subject to the immigration laws of the United States (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101)).

(b) *EFFECT OF PUERTO RICAN CITIZENSHIP.*—Nothing in this Act precludes or limits the applicability of section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1481), except that the provision of citizenship by the laws of Puerto Rico shall not constitute or otherwise serve as the basis of loss, or relinquishment of United States citizenship under such section.

(c) *CITIZENSHIP AT BIRTH AFTER INDEPENDENCE.*—An individual born in Puerto Rico after the effective date of independence to at least one parent who became a United States citizen under section 302 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1402) is not a United States citizen at birth under subsections (c), (d), or (g) of section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401(c), (d) or (g)).

(d) *TRAVEL AND WORK AUTHORIZATION.*—

(1) Any person in the following categories may enter, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as a nonimmigrant in the United States and its territories and possessions without regard to paragraphs (5)(A) and (7) of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a); (5)(A) and (7))—

(A) a person who acquires the citizenship of Puerto Rico, at birth, on or after the effective date of independence; or

(B) a naturalized citizen of Puerto Rico, who has been an actual resident there for not less than five years after attaining such naturalization and who holds a proof of such residence. Such persons shall be considered to have the permission of the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept employment in the United States.

(2) The right of such persons to establish habitual residence in a territory or possession of the United States may, however, be subjected to nondiscriminatory limitations provided for—

(A) in statutes or regulations of the United States; or

(B) in those statutes or regulations of the territory or possession concerned which are authorized by the laws of the United States.

(3) This subsection shall expire 25 years after the date of independence.

(e) *CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101) is amended by striking “Puerto Rico,” in subsection (a) paragraph (36) and in subsection (a) paragraph (38).

(2) *PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE.*—Puerto Rico shall be considered to be in the United States, as such term is defined in section 101(a)(38) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(38)) prior to the effective date of independence.

(f) *RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.*—Nothing in this section shall limit the power and authority of the United States to change policy requirements for United States citizenship.

SEC. 111. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND GRANTS.

(a) **RIGHTS AND BENEFITS.**—All vested rights and benefits which accrue to residents of the territory of Puerto Rico under the laws of the United States from past services or contributions, such as rights and benefits for veterans or relatives of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, retired Government employees, or beneficiaries of old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the Social Security Act, shall not be interrupted after the proclamation of independence but will continue until such time as said rights and benefits are completely extinguished according to the applicable laws of the United States. All services which must be rendered as part of these rights and benefits shall be made available through the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico in accordance with agreements reached by the two nations.

(b) **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.**—Notwithstanding the provisions in subsection (a), all contributions made by employees and employers in Puerto Rico to the Social Security system with respect to persons who, upon the proclamation of independence, are residents of the nation of Puerto Rico and are not yet eligible for old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the system, shall be transferred to the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico once said Government establishes its own social security system. The Government of the nation of Puerto Rico may not use these funds for any purpose other than the establishment and operation of a social security system. Upon the transfer described herein, the obligations of the United States Government under the Social Security Act with respect to such residents of the nation of Puerto Rico shall cease.

(c) **OTHER FEDERAL TRANSFER PAYMENTS.**—

(1) **BLOCK GRANTS.**—All other Federal transfer payments to individuals and to the Government of the territory of Puerto Rico shall be maintained in the form of annual block grants to be used discretionally by the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(2) **ANNUAL AGGREGATE FUNDING.**—During the ten fiscal years following the proclamation of independence, the annual block grants shall amount to the annual aggregate funding of all programs which currently extend to the territory of Puerto Rico, or of all programs which shall have been extended to the territory of Puerto Rico during the fiscal year immediately prior to the proclamation of independence, whichever shall be greater.

(3) **DECREASE IN AMOUNT.**—The annual block grants shall decrease thereafter on a straight-line basis, at the rate of ten percent each year, beginning on the eleventh fiscal year after the proclamation of independence. At any time during the aforementioned transition period the terms of this subsection may be modified by agreement between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico.

TITLE II—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — SOVEREIGNTY IN FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES**SEC. 201. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.**

(a) **ELECTION OF DELEGATES.**—Not later than 6 months after the effective date of certification of a plebiscite result under this Act in favor of Sovereignty in Free Association with the United States, the legislature of Puerto Rico shall provide for the election of delegates to a constitutional Convention to formulate and draft a Constitution for the nation of Puerto Rico.

(b) **ELIGIBLE VOTERS.**—All eligible voters may vote in the election of delegates to the constitutional Convention.

(c) **GENERAL APPLICABILITY OF ELECTORAL LAW.**—The laws of the territory of Puerto Rico relating to the electoral process shall apply to a special election held under this Act.

(d) **INITIAL MEETING.**—Not later than 3 months after the election of delegates to the con-

stitutional Convention, the elected delegates shall meet at such time and place as the legislature of Puerto Rico shall determine. The initial meeting shall constitute the establishment of the constitutional Convention.

SEC. 202. CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The constitutional Convention under section 201 shall formulate and draft a Constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights, including—

(1) due process and equal protection under the law;

(2) freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion;

(3) the rights of the accused;

(4) any other economic, social, and cultural rights as the constitutional Convention may deem appropriate and necessary; and

(5) provisions to ensure that no individual born in the nation of Puerto Rico shall be stateless at birth.

SEC. 203. SUBMISSION; RATIFICATION.

(a) **SUBMISSION.**—Not later than 2 years after the establishment of the constitutional Convention, the Constitution formulated and drafted by the constitutional Convention shall be submitted to the eligible voters of Puerto Rico for ratification or rejection in a special election.

(b) **MANNER OF ELECTION.**—The special election held under this subsection shall be held in the manner prescribed by the legislature of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 204. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one month after the ratification of the Constitution under section 203, the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall issue a proclamation calling for the election of such officers of the nation of Puerto Rico as may be required by the ratified Constitution.

(b) **REJECTION.**—If the special election results in rejection of the Constitution, the process provided for in sections 201 through 203 shall be repeated, except that section 201(a) shall be applied by substituting—

(1) "the special election" for "a plebiscite"; and

(2) "rejecting the Constitution" for "in favor of sovereignty in free association with the United States".

(c) **DEADLINE; PROCEDURES.**—The election under subsection (a) shall be held—

(1) not later than 6 months after the date of ratification of the Constitution; and

(2) in accordance with the procedures and requirements established in the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(d) **CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS.**—Not later than 10 days after the election of officers under subsection (a), the Elections Commission shall certify the results of the election. The Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico shall inform the results of the election to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 205. PROCLAMATIONS BY PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; HEAD OF STATE OF PUERTO RICO.

(a) **PROCLAMATION.**—Not later than one month after the official certification of the elected officers of the nation of Puerto Rico under section 204, the President of the United States shall by proclamation—

(1) withdraw and surrender all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control, or sovereignty then existing and exercised by the United States over the territory and residents of Puerto Rico;

(2) recognize, on behalf of the United States of America, the international sovereignty through free association of the nation of Puerto Rico and the authority of the government instituted by eligible voters of Puerto Rico under the Constitution of their own adoption; and

(3) state that the effective date of withdrawal of the sovereignty of the United States and recognition of international sovereignty through free association shall be the same as the date of the proclamation.

(b) **COPY OF PROCLAMATION FORWARDED.**—The President of the United States shall forward a copy of the proclamation issued under subsection (a) not later than one week after signature to the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico, the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

(c) **DATE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OFFICE.**—Not later than one week after the date of receipt of the Presidential proclamation and with the advice of the officer elected as head of state of the nation, the presiding officer of the constitutional Convention shall determine the date on which the Government of the nation shall take office, and shall so notify the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico, the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 206. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS.

Upon the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association as provided in this title, and except as otherwise provided in this title or in any separate agreements thereafter concluded between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico—

(1) all property, rights and interests which the United States may have acquired over Puerto Rico by virtue of the Treaty of Paris of 1898, and thereafter by cession, purchase, or eminent domain, with the exception of such land and other property, rights, or interests as may have been sold or otherwise legally disposed of prior to the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, shall vest ipso facto in the nation of Puerto Rico; and

(2) except as provided in section 209, all laws of the United States applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico immediately prior to the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association shall no longer apply in the nation of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 207. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) **JUDGMENTS BEFORE PROCLAMATION.**—The nation of Puerto Rico shall recognize and give effect to all orders and judgments rendered by United States or territorial courts before the date of the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association pursuant to the laws of the United States then applicable to the territory of Puerto Rico.

(b) **CONTINUITY OF PENDING PROCEEDINGS.**—All judicial proceedings pending in the courts of the territory of Puerto Rico on the day of the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association shall be continued in the corresponding courts under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(c) **TRANSFER OF JUDICIAL POWER.**—Upon the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, the judicial power of the United States shall no longer extend to Puerto Rico. All proceedings pending in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall be transferred to the corresponding Puerto Rican courts of competence or other competent judicial authority under the Constitution of the nation of Puerto Rico for disposition in conformity with laws applicable at the time when the controversy in process arose. All proceedings pending in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, or in the Supreme Court of the United States, that initiated in, or that could have been initiated in, the courts of the territory or in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto

Rico shall continue until their final disposition and shall be submitted to the competent authority of the nation of Puerto Rico for proper execution: Provided, That neither the United States nor any of its officers is a party, in which case any final judgment shall be properly executed by the competent authority of the United States.

SEC. 208. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION LAWS AFTER SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH FREE ASSOCIATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) PUERTO RICAN NATIONALITY.—After the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, the citizenship status of each individual born in Puerto Rico shall be determined in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the nation of Puerto Rico.

(2) UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION LAWS.—Except as described in this section, after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, citizens of Puerto Rico seeking to enter into the United States or obtain citizenship in the United States shall be subject to the immigration laws of the United States (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101)).

(b) EFFECT OF PUERTO RICAN CITIZENSHIP.—Nothing in this Act precludes or limits the applicability of section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1481), except that the provision of citizenship by the laws of Puerto Rico shall not constitute or otherwise serve as the basis of loss, or relinquishment of United States citizenship under such section.

(c) CITIZENSHIP AT BIRTH AFTER SOVEREIGNTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as described in paragraph (2), an individual born in Puerto Rico after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association to at least one parent who became a United States citizen under section 302 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1402) is not a United States citizen at birth under subsections (c), (d), or (g) of section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401 (c), (d) or (g)).

(2) TRANSITION PERIOD.—During the implementation of the first Articles of Free Association, an individual born in Puerto Rico to at least one parent who is a citizen of the United States shall be a United States citizen at birth under section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401) if otherwise eligible.

(d) TRAVEL AND WORK AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) Any person in the following categories may enter, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as a nonimmigrant in the United States and its territories and possessions without regard to paragraphs (5)(A) and (7) of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a); (5)(A) and (7)):

(A) a person who acquires the citizenship of Puerto Rico, at birth, on or after the effective date of international sovereignty through free association; or

(B) a naturalized citizen of Puerto Rico, who has been an actual resident there for not less than five years after attaining such naturalization and who holds a proof of such residence. Such persons shall be considered to have the permission of the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept employment in the United States.

(2) The right of such persons to establish habitual residence in a territory or possession of the United States may, however, be subjected to nondiscriminatory limitations provided for—

(A) in statutes or regulations of the United States; or

(B) in those statutes or regulations of the territory or possession concerned which are authorized by the laws of the United States.

(3) This subsection shall expire upon the termination of the Articles of Free Association in accordance with section 211.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101) is amended by striking “Puerto Rico,” in sub-

section (a) paragraph (36) and in subsection (a) paragraph (38).

(2) PRIOR TO SOVEREIGNTY.—Puerto Rico shall be considered to be in the United States, as such term is defined in section 101(a)(38) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(38)) prior to the date of international sovereignty through free association.

(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall limit the power and authority of the United States to change policy requirements for United States citizenship.

SEC. 209. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAW.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the initial meeting of a constitutional Convention under section 201(d), the President shall initiate a review of Federal law with respect to Puerto Rico, including those regarding—

- (1) taxation of persons and businesses;
- (2) health care;
- (3) housing;
- (4) transportation;
- (5) education; and
- (6) entitlement programs.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than one year after the date on which the President initiates a review under subsection (a), the President shall submit recommendations to Congress for changes to Federal law identified during such review, as the President deems appropriate.

SEC. 210. BILATERAL NEGOTIATING COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If a plebiscite held under this Act results in a majority vote for sovereignty in free association with the United States, there shall be a Bilateral Negotiating Commission which shall conduct negotiations on Articles of Free Association with the United States.

(b) MEMBERS.—Not later than 3 months after the establishment of the constitutional Convention under section 201—

(1) the Convention shall elect, by majority vote, 5 members from among its delegates to join the Bilateral Negotiating Commission on behalf of Puerto Rico; and

(2) the President of the United States shall designate 5 members to the Bilateral Negotiating Commission, one of whom shall also be nominated for the rank of Ambassador, to negotiate on behalf of the United States.

(c) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 3 months after the election and designation of members to the Bilateral Negotiating Commission, members shall meet at such time and place as the legislature of Puerto Rico shall determine. Such meeting shall constitute the establishment of the Bilateral Negotiating Commission.

(d) DUTIES.—The Bilateral Negotiating Commission shall—

(1) be responsible for expediting the orderly transfer of all functions currently exercised by the Government of the United States in Puerto Rico, to Puerto Rico, and shall recommend to Congress any appropriate legislation to carry into effect such transfer, including any appropriate enabling legislation as may be required by the Articles of Free Association;

(2) negotiate all matters pertaining to the government-to-government relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States through the development of the Articles of Free Association, including foreign affairs, trade, finance, taxation, currency, economic assistance, security and defense, dispute resolution, immigration, economic benefits (including grants), and termination of the free association status; and

(3) endeavor to complete the Articles of Free Association not later than 2 years after the commencement of the constitutional Convention.

(e) COLLABORATION.—The Government of the territory of Puerto Rico and the agencies of the Government of the United States shall collaborate with the Bilateral Negotiating Commission to provide for the orderly transfer of the functions of government as required by the Articles of Free Association.

SEC. 211. ARTICLES OF FREE ASSOCIATION APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) APPROVAL.—The Articles of Free Association shall come into effect upon mutual agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of Puerto Rico after completion of approval by—

(1) a separate ratification vote on the Articles by the eligible voters in the special election held under section 203; and

(2) the Government of the United States in accordance with its constitutional processes.

(b) REJECTION.—If the special election under subsection (a)(1) results in rejection of the Articles of Free Association, the process provided for in section 210 and subsection (a) shall be repeated.

SEC. 212. TERMINATION.

The Articles of Free Association between the United States and Puerto Rico may be terminated at will by either party at any time.

SEC. 213. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND GRANTS.

(a) RIGHTS AND BENEFITS.—All vested rights and benefits which accrue to residents of the territory of Puerto Rico under the laws of the United States from past services or contributions, such as rights and benefits for veterans or relatives of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, retired Government employees, or beneficiaries of old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the Social Security Act, shall not be interrupted after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association but will continue until such time as said rights and benefits are completely extinguished according to the applicable laws of the United States. All services which must be rendered as part of these rights and benefits shall be made available through the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico in accordance with agreements reached by the two nations.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), all contributions made by employees and employers in Puerto Rico to the Social Security system with respect to persons who, upon the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, are residents of the nation of Puerto Rico and are not yet eligible for old age, disability, or survivors' insurance benefits under the system, shall be transferred to the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico once said Government establishes its own social security system. The Government of the nation of Puerto Rico may not use these funds for any purpose other than the establishment and operation of a social security system. Upon the transfer described herein, the obligations of the United States Government under the Social Security Act with respect to such residents of the nation of Puerto Rico shall cease.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL TRANSFER PAYMENTS.—All other Federal transfer payments to individuals and to the Government of the territory of Puerto Rico shall be maintained in the form of annual block grants to be used discretionally by the Government of the nation of Puerto Rico—

(1) during the 10 fiscal years following the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, the annual block grants shall amount to the annual aggregate funding of all programs which currently extend to the territory of Puerto Rico, or of all programs which shall have been extended to the territory of Puerto Rico during the fiscal year immediately prior to the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association, whichever shall be greater; and

(2) the annual block grants shall decrease thereafter on a straight-line basis, at the rate of ten percent each year, beginning on the eleventh fiscal year after the proclamation of international sovereignty through free association. At any time during the aforementioned transition period the terms of this subsection may be modified by agreement between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico.

(d) **REVISION.**—The terms and conditions of this subsection may be revised as part of an agreement under the Articles of Free Association.

TITLE III—TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION — STATEHOOD

SEC. 301. PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION; ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.

If a plebiscite held under this Act results in a majority vote for statehood:

(1) **PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION; DATE OF ADMISSION.**—Upon receipt of the Elections Commission's certification of the plebiscite results pursuant to section 5(d), the President shall issue a proclamation declaring the date that Puerto Rico is admitted as a State of the Union on an equal footing with all other States, which shall be a date not later than one year after the effective date of the plebiscite results.

(2) **SUBMISSION OF PROCLAMATION.**—The President shall cause such proclamation to be submitted to the Governor of Puerto Rico, the legislature of Puerto Rico, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources.

(3) **ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.**—Subject to the provisions of this Act, and upon the date declared by the President for admission of Puerto Rico as a State under the proclamation under paragraph (1), the territory of Puerto Rico shall be a State of the United States of America and as such admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the other States in all respects. Upon admission, Puerto Rico shall be known as the State of Puerto Rico.

(4) **INCORPORATION.**—Puerto Rico shall remain unincorporated until its admission as a State of the Union under paragraph (3).

SEC. 302. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LAW.

(a) **REVIEW.**—Not later than 30 days after the certification of a plebiscite result under this Act in favor of statehood, the President shall initiate a review of Federal law with respect to Puerto Rico, including those regarding—

- (1) taxation of persons and businesses;
- (2) health care;
- (3) housing;
- (4) transportation;
- (5) education; and
- (6) entitlement programs.

(b) **RECOMMENDATIONS.**—Not later than one year after the date on which the President initiates a review under subsection (a), the President shall submit any recommendations to Congress for changes to Federal law identified during such review, as the President deems appropriate.

SEC. 303. TERRITORY AND BOUNDARIES.

The State of Puerto Rico shall consist of all of the islands, together with their appurtenant reefs, seafloor, submerged lands, and territorial waters in the seaward boundary, presently under the jurisdiction of the territory of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 304. CONSTITUTION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Constitution of the territory of Puerto Rico, as approved by Public Law 82-447 and subsequently amended as of the date of enactment of this Act is hereby found to be republican in form and in conformity with the Constitution of the United States and the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and is hereby accepted, ratified, and confirmed as the Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico.

(b) **FUTURE CONSTITUTIONS.**—The Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico—

- (1) shall always be republican in form; and
- (2) shall not be repugnant to the Constitution of the United States and the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

SEC. 305. ELECTIONS OF SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES, CERTIFICATION, AND LEGAL DISPUTES.

(a) **ELECTIONS OF SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES.**—Not more than one month after the proc-

lamation under section 301, the Governor of Puerto Rico shall issue a declaration that shall designate and announce the dates and other requirements for primary and general elections under applicable Federal and local law for representation in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States upon admission of Puerto Rico as a State.

(b) **RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.**—The office of Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico shall cease to exist upon the swearing in of the first Representative from the State of Puerto Rico to the House of Representatives.

(c) **SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Upon its admission into the Union, the State of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to Senators and Representatives who shall be entitled to be admitted to seats in the Congress of the United States and to all the rights and privileges of Senators and Representatives of the other States in the Congress of the United States.

(2) **FIRST ELECTION OF SENATORS.**—In the first election of Senators, the two senatorial offices shall be separately identified and designated, and no person may be a candidate for both offices. Nothing in this section shall impair the privilege of the Senate to determine the class and term to which each of the Senators elected shall be assigned, with the exception that the Senators shall not be in the same class.

(3) **FIRST ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES.**—In the first election of Representatives, and subsequent elections until the next Census-based reapportionment cycle, the State of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to the same number of Representatives as the State whose most recent Census population was closest to, but less than, that of Puerto Rico, and such Representatives shall be in addition to the membership of the House of Representatives as now prescribed by law. Any such increase in the membership shall not operate to either increase or decrease the permanent membership of the House of Representatives as prescribed in the Act of August 8, 1911 (37 Stat. 13), nor shall such temporary increase affect the basis of apportionment established by the Act of November 15, 1941 (55 Stat. 761), for the 83d Congress and each Congress thereafter, unless Congress acts to increase the total number of Members of the House of Representatives. Thereafter, the State of Puerto Rico shall be entitled to such number of Representatives as provided for by applicable law based on the next reapportionment. The apportionment of congressional districts for the first election and subsequent election of Representatives shall be conducted as provided for by the Constitution and laws of the State of Puerto Rico for state legislative districts.

(d) **CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS.**—The Elections Commission shall certify the results of primary and general elections for representation in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States to the Governor. Not later than 10 days after the date of each certification, the Governor shall declare the results of the primary and general elections, and transmit the results of each election to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(e) **JURISDICTION OF DISTRICT COURT.**—The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction of any civil action alleging a dispute or controversy pertaining to electoral processes conducted under this section.

SEC. 306. STATE TITLE TO LAND AND PROPERTY.

(a) **STATE TITLE.**—The State of Puerto Rico and its political subdivisions and dependencies shall have and retain title to all property, real and personal, held by the territory of Puerto Rico and its political subdivisions and dependencies on the date of the admission of Puerto Rico into the Union.

(b) **FEDERAL TITLE.**—Any lands and other properties that, as of the date of admission of

Puerto Rico into the Union, are set aside pursuant to law for the use of the United States under any—

- (1) Act of Congress;
- (2) Executive order;
- (3) proclamation of the President; or
- (4) proclamation of the Governor of the territory of Puerto Rico,

shall remain the property of the United States.

(c) **CONTINENTAL SHELF.**—The State of Puerto Rico shall have the exclusive right to explore, exploit, lease, possess, and use all seabed, natural, and mineral resources lying within three marine leagues (nine nautical miles) from its shore, as granted under section 8 of the Act of March 2, 1917 (48 U.S.C. 749; 39 Stat. 954). All other rights of sovereignty in regards to the continental shelf and waters, shall belong to the United States, except those already vested in Puerto Rico.

SEC. 307. CONTINUITY OF LAWS, GOVERNMENT, AND OBLIGATIONS.

Upon the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union:

(1) **CONTINUITY OF LAWS.**—All of the territorial laws in force in Puerto Rico on the date of issuance of the proclamation described in section 301(1) not inconsistent with this Act or the Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico shall be and continue in force and effect throughout the State, until amended, modified, or repealed by the State. All of the laws of the United States shall have the same force and effect within the State as in the other several States.

(2) **CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT.**—The individuals holding legislative, executive, and judicial offices of Puerto Rico shall continue to discharge the duties of their respective offices when Puerto Rico becomes a State of the Union in, under, or by authority of the government of the State, as provided by the constitution and laws of the State.

(3) **CONTINUITY OF OBLIGATIONS.**—All contracts, obligations, liabilities, debts, and claims of the territory of Puerto Rico and its instrumentalities at the moment of admission shall continue in full force and effect as the contracts, obligations, liabilities, debts, and claims of the State of Puerto Rico and its instrumentalities when Puerto Rico becomes a State of the Union.

(4) **USE AND ENJOYMENT OF PROPERTY.**—All laws of the United States reserving to the United States the free use or enjoyment of property which vests in or is conveyed to the State of Puerto Rico or its political subdivisions pursuant to this section or reserving the right to alter, amend, or repeal laws relating thereto, shall cease to be effective.

SEC. 308. JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS.

(a) **PENDING.**—No writ, action, indictment, cause, or proceeding pending in any court of the territory of Puerto Rico, shall abate by reason of the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union, but shall proceed within such appropriate State courts as shall be established under the Constitution of the State of Puerto Rico, or shall continue in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico, as the nature of the case may require.

(b) **NOT YET PENDING.**—All civil causes of action and all criminal offenses, which shall have arisen or been committed before the admission of the State, but as to which no writ, action, indictment, or proceeding shall be pending at the date of such admission, shall be subject to prosecution in the appropriate State courts or in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico in like manner, to the same extent, and with like right of appellate review, as if such State had been created and such State courts had been established prior to the accrual of such causes of action or the commission of such offenses. The admission of the State shall effect no change in the procedural or substantive laws governing causes of action and criminal offenses which shall have arisen or

been committed, and any such criminal offenses as shall have been committed against the laws of the territory of Puerto Rico, shall be tried and punished by the appropriate courts of the State, and any such criminal offenses as shall have been committed against the laws of the United States shall be tried and punished in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

(c) APPEALS.—Parties shall have the same rights of judicial review of final decisions of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico or the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, in any case finally decided prior to the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union, whether or not an appeal therefrom shall have been perfected prior to such admission. The United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States, shall have the same jurisdiction in such cases as by law provided prior to the admission of the State into the Union. Any mandate issued subsequent to the admission of the State, shall be to the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico or a court of the State, as appropriate. Parties shall have the same rights of appeal from and appellate review of all orders, judgments, and decrees of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico and of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, in any case pending at the time of admission of the State into the Union, and the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico and the Supreme Court of the United States shall have the same jurisdiction therein, as by law provided in any case arising subsequent to the admission of the State into the Union.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8393.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8393, legislation I was proud to introduce along with my colleagues, Representatives NYDIA VÉLAZQUEZ and DARREN SOTO, Resident Commissioner JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and Majority Leader STENY HOYER, to resolve Puerto Rico's territorial status.

This bill being on the floor today was far from assured. There were many times over the past several weeks when it appeared there wasn't any hope of ever bringing this bill to the floor. In fact, my colleagues and I were negotiating final changes as recently as 24 hours ago.

But with the prodding of Leader HOYER, we persevered. In spite of opposition to the historic nature of what we

are about to accomplish, we persevered.

I commend and congratulate my colleagues who put aside their philosophical differences and worked to arrive at a compromise that we can all support.

Last year, the Natural Resources Committee held two legislative hearings where Puerto Rican-elected government officials, legal and human rights experts, and residents offered testimony and feedback to the committee on the details of those bills.

Those bills that we were discussing were two bills, one dealing primarily with statehood status and the other one seeking a self-determination path. Those two bills were diametrically opposed, and until the negotiations began, little progress was seen moving the question of status forward.

The Puerto Rico Status Act combines important elements of these two bills to present a compromise that also incorporates input from the full range of voices among Puerto Rico's status debate and that would be supported by a majority of Members of Congress. That is the bill that we bring forward today.

We had in-person public hearings, including with over 100 individuals who shared comments and suggestions on the text with the delegation at our public forum in Puerto Rico. In addition to these in-person opportunities for public input, we also published the draft text on POPVOX, an online submission tool that members of the public used to share more than 100 comments, all of which were reviewed and considered while developing the final language.

The Puerto Rico Status Act is, therefore, the product of a participatory and informed process. It incorporates expertise and knowledge from a wide range of stakeholders who have grappled with the dilemma of Puerto Rico's second-class political status for many years.

Finding a resolution to Puerto Rico's political status has been elusive and difficult, and it has been that way for a long time. Recent efforts to resolve the issue began in 1991 with competing bills introduced in the House and Senate, followed by legislation sponsored by our former colleague Don Young in 1998, and finally the Puerto Rico Democracy Act in 2010, sponsored by then-Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner and current Governor Pierluisi.

While each of those previous bills passed the House, as we hope our bill will today, as well, they ultimately failed because they did not possess the necessary elements to end the colonial status of the island through a fair and informed process.

In becoming chair of the Natural Resources Committee, I made the issue of resolving Puerto Rico's political status a priority. It is crucial to me that any proposal from Congress to decolonize Puerto Rico be informed and led by Puerto Ricans.

As a non-Puerto Rican, I cannot claim the experience of Puerto Ricans who have fought for equality and autonomy for their island for so many years. However, as someone of Mexican descent and indigenous ancestry, I feel a sense of solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico in that enduring struggle. We continue to strive for equality and preserve our traditions, as we all do that, and that struggle is a shared experience among marginalized and disenfranchised people in this country and in Puerto Rico.

I am proud to be discussing a piece of legislation, a proposal, today that assists the people of Puerto Rico to directly be involved in determining their political future.

In recent years, we have seen all too painfully that the current colonial territory status is no longer viable and is incapable of providing either adequate political or economic benefits to the people of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico's current status is what impedes its economic development. PROMESA and its financial oversight and management board, the shortcomings of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, or PREPA, and the inadequate Federal response under the previous administration to disasters like Hurricane Maria and the COVID-19 pandemic, these are all products of the current territorial status.

Recent Supreme Court rulings have only further clarified that, as a territory, Puerto Rico lacks the same constitutional protections and rights as in the 50 States.

This bill would finally stop offering the problem as a continued solution and would let the people of Puerto Rico choose a nonterritory, noncolonial status for themselves.

I am extremely grateful to all the political and community leaders, residents, and staff who worked to produce this compromise and contributed to this bill.

I thank House Majority Leader STENY HOYER; the Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Pierluisi; Representatives VÉLAZQUEZ, SOTO, and OCASIO-CORTEZ; and Resident Commissioner GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN for their leadership and dedication throughout a difficult but very necessary process.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, introduced in July 2022, H.R. 8393, the Puerto Rico Status Act, would authorize a federally sponsored plebiscite to occur on November 5, 2023, and it would dictate to the voters of Puerto Rico three and only three choices: independence, sovereignty and free association, or statehood. If no one option receives a majority vote, there will be a runoff on March 3, 2024.

I cannot support this measure because of process concerns and wide-ranging policy changes that involve the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee, along with several

other House committees that haven't even seen this bill.

The Committee on Natural Resources has not held a hearing on this bill, nor have the other committees with expertise on complex issues of U.S. citizenship, taxation and entitlement programs, foreign policy, and many other matters. None of them have been given an opportunity to openly consider, debate, and amend this bill.

The question of Puerto Rico's political status is a life-altering decision for the people of Puerto Rico. Just as we would expect the people of Puerto Rico to deliberate its questions, understand its consequences, and accept responsibility for the choice, so should Congress.

These issues are far too important for this body to act without proper deliberation. Because of the hasty and secretive process that was used to develop this bill, it contains many concerning and unresolved issues.

The bill contradicts itself, offering Puerto Rico the promise of independence while prescribing actions that should be taken by the newly sovereign nation. How can you be independent yet have another nation dictate what your actions will be?

It promises the trappings of U.S. citizenship without the responsibilities of being a part of the United States.

It is unfortunate that we are here considering this legislation on the House floor after the majority has held backroom negotiations instead of open, transparent hearings and markups. A regular and open legislative process would have allowed Members of this body and the people of Puerto Rico—more than 3 million United States citizens—to fully assess what this bill proposes and what it means for this and future generations.

In fact, the majority made changes to the bill that had even less consideration than the version ordered to be reported by the Committee on Natural Resources in July, cutting backroom deals as recently as this week.

We learned this bill would be on the floor even before we had the text from the Rules Committee. We didn't even know what we would be debating when we learned this bill would be on the floor.

Madam Speaker, there is a favorite Latin expression of mine. It is *lux et veritas*. It means light and truth. This body, this Congress, and this Federal Government could use a lot more light and truth.

You see, without light, when you are in the darkness, you don't know what truth is. If you don't know what truth is, then you make bad policy decisions.

Unfortunately, the lack of transparency seems to be par for the course in Congress anymore. This bill should have been debated. It should have had light shone on it.

This is just bad policy. I don't see how anybody could read this bill and think that there are not problems with it, that there is not a lack of logic.

There is incoherence in the text of the bill, and it is taking us to a position where we would make bad decisions.

Here we are, just a week after this Chamber was left guessing what would be in the final NDAA and while we are currently guessing what will be in a last-minute omnibus spending bill that will, no doubt, be rolled out in the dark of night. This is another example of what is so broken about this process, what is so broken about the way this majority has led.

If this majority were interested in helping Puerto Rico, we would be advancing legislation to address the reliability of the island's energy grid, ensure its fiscal solvency, repair its infrastructure, or meet any of the other tangible needs for the people of Puerto Rico.

We should be treating these U.S. citizens with respect and letting a full and robust legislative process in the light of day take place to address the status question and the many implications for the people of Puerto Rico and for all Americans.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "no" vote on H.R. 8393, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1115

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, the only point of darkness that I can see is the greatest democracy on Earth, the United States of America, and what this bill does is provides some light and consistency to that great democracy by saying you must rid yourself of this colonial legacy. Our great Nation should not be a colonial holder of other countries and other futures. This is an opportunity to break from that and to encourage democracy.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ). As I indicated earlier, my thanks go to her for her work, as well.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, for 124 years Puerto Rico, the nation where I was born and raised, has been a colony of the United States.

Invaded by the United States during the 1898 Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico has remained in a state of colonial limbo that flies in the face of the anticolonial values upon which the American Republic was founded.

Congress' unlimited plenary powers over Puerto Rico are reminiscent of the monarchical powers enjoyed by King George III against which the Founders of the American Republic so bravely fought.

If Hamilton and Madison were alive today, they would be shocked to see how the anticolonial Constitution they drafted in 1787 is currently used to legitimize colonialism in Puerto Rico over 300 years later. Advocating now for the continuation of the status quo on the island is the height of hypocrisy.

Colonialism has destroyed the Puerto Rican economy.

Colonialism has divided the Puerto Rican people.

Colonialism has eaten away our people's sense of dignity and self-worth.

Colonialism has made the people of Puerto Rico both psychologically and economically dependent on the United States.

Colonialism is not only humiliating for Puerto Rico, but it is an embarrassment to the United States—the United States that holds itself out as a leader of the free world and that stands up to imperialist tyrants abroad while keeping colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Puerto Rico's colonial crisis is not a simple domestic issue as some erroneously believe. Make no mistake, Madam Speaker, this is an international issue that directly affects America's standing and image around the world, which is why this double-talk must come to an end.

The time has come to fully decolonize Puerto Rico. It has been 100 years since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Balzac*—the last *Insular Case*—and 70 years after the ratification of the territorial constitution of 1952. History calls upon us to put politics aside and do right by the people of Puerto Rico.

For the last 2 years, I have been tirelessly fighting to craft a bill for Puerto Rico that is anticolonial, fair, and transparent. A bill that will, first and foremost, put the people of Puerto Rico who—since the days of the 1898 invasion—have remained on the sideline front and center.

From Puerto Rico to Florida, and, yes, to the barrios of New York—the ones I am proud to represent—the voices of Boricuas are now finally being heard. Let us not forget that it is thanks to the vibrant Puerto Rican diaspora from Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx that my colleague, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, and I are able to walk these Halls of Congress today.

Today, I stand on the shoulders of millions of Puerto Ricans who had to flee Puerto Rico because its colonial condition has not allowed them to live on the island where they were born.

But Puerto Ricans are strong. They have been kicked out of their home and yet have managed to succeed and flourish in cold and foreign places and have graced us with the likes of Lola Rodríguez de Tío, María Libertad Gómez, Nilita Vientos Gastón, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Rita Moreno, Julia de Burgos, and Mari Carmen Aponte, among many others. I feel so honored to be here standing today on the shoulders of all these women and many others who have paved the way.

More importantly, we are here today for the people on the island: those who suffer every day because the prices they pay for necessities like electricity and food are sky-high thanks to the Jones Act.

We are here for those who have lost all their appliances time and time again because we have failed in helping the island to keep the lights on.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, we are here for those who have lost loved ones after Maria, the earthquakes, COVID-19, and, most recently, Fiona.

We are here today because we must move towards decolonization. The current status is unsustainable, fundamentally unfair, and un-American.

The process that has led us to this moment has been contentious, complex, and full of debate. It is no secret that Members advocating for this bill, including myself, hold differing opinions on which noncolonial option is the best for the people of Puerto Rico.

The consensus bill before us today clearly defines Puerto Rico's non-territorial status options; namely, free association, independence, and statehood. It is the first time Congress recognizes free association as a separate decolonizing formula.

More importantly, this bill includes dual citizenship rights under both the independence and free association options like we have in the Marshall Islands or Palau.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has again expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I fought hard for the incorporation of these provisions because Congress has the moral obligation to offer Puerto Rico the necessary tools to transition to a new postcolonial order. And, yes, that includes financial resources to make Puerto Rico whole after 124 years of exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation.

Madam Speaker, I want to take this time to thank Chairman GRIJALVA; the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN); ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, who has made incredible contributions to make this bill better and transparent; Congressman SOTO; and the staff who worked day in and day out.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I want to be as crystal clear as I can. I think this is not only my position, but I believe it is the position of everyone in the minority—the whole Republican Conference and I would hope it would be the position of all of the Democratic Caucus—that America is not a symbol of darkness.

America is still a shining city on a hill. America offers more hope and more protections for freedom than anybody in the history of the world has offered and will continue to offer that. A country that is founded on the protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of

happiness cannot be considered a country that is a symbol of darkness.

I heard a lot of talk about colonialism. But passing a bill that tells a sovereign nation what its laws should be sounds a lot like colonialism to me.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ).

Mr. BENTZ. Madam Speaker, let me ask this question: Will the United States be the better for adding Puerto Rico as a State?

The answer is perhaps.

The answer also is that we need to address the issue, and we need to address the issue correctly.

I had the privilege of sitting through a discussion of this bill 6 months ago. I was surprised when it abruptly appeared this morning, because back then I pointed out that as a practicing attorney, I have had many occasions to put together large business deals, and we used incredible care to bring those deals together.

Yet, when I see something that is dealing with not only the 3.2 million people in Puerto Rico but also the 340 million people in the United States being treated with such a cavalier nature, then I have to ask:

Why do such a disservice not only to the United States but also Puerto Rico?

I asked that question in committee.

The bill fails to talk about and address U.S. sovereignty, U.S. elections, government benefits, taxation, immigration, and a myriad of other important issues, all of which need to be addressed. This is not to suggest that Puerto Rico at some point shouldn't be a State.

The question is: How do we go about doing it?

Because if we are going to add two more Senators and a number of other Representatives, if we are going to upset the structure of our Nation with this addition, then why aren't we doing the proper study to get it right?

Because there is no reason for us to jump into something like this and upset the rest of our Nation.

Why would we do such a thing?

It makes no sense.

I was sad to see this bill appear here today because I don't like getting up and talking this aggressively about hard work that has been done by the people of Puerto Rico and my good friends in the delegation. But the truth has to be called out. If we are going to add another State to this Nation, then let's do it right.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I have been working on this issue almost all of my career in the Congress of the United States.

The previous gentleman said: Let's do it right.

This does it right. This does it after years and years and years and years and years of consideration.

I hesitate because I agree, I think, almost in whole with the remarks that Mr. WESTERMAN has made. Mr. WESTERMAN is a Member of the Congress that I respect. He and I work on things that we think are very important to mankind, here in this country and around the world, in terms of our global environment.

America is a great nation. It is a generous nation. I have said throughout the world that America is the least acquisitive great power that has existed in the world.

What do I mean by acquisitive?

We did not fight wars to take property and to acquire countries, to do what Putin criminally does today. In fact, what we did in those wars in which we have participated in was to build up countries, and they are now democracies: Germany, Japan, Italy, and other nations which we have occupied for a temporary period of time to make sure they were free and help them be free. This bill is about the Puerto Rican people and their island.

□ 1130

And to redeem a premise that we have argued to all the world ought to be central to their policies. That is the right of peoples to self-determination. The right of peoples to say: This is who I am, and this is the political environment in which I want to live—by free votes, not arms, not force, but by the choice of the people. That is what this legislation does.

Puerto Ricans and people of Puerto Rican descent have had an important place in the American family for over a century. They contribute to American culture. They help protect America's national security. They support the American economy and our shared prosperity.

They are American citizens. We made that decision because that was our decision to make whether we were going to allow them to be American citizens or not. Frankly, whether they have any relationship with us or not is our American Congress' decision. They are today American citizens like all of us.

For far too long, however, the people of Puerto Rico have been excluded from the full promise of American democracy and self-determination that our Nation has always championed. We owe it to our own values, and we owe it to the Puerto Rican people to bring an end to their island's 124-year-old status as a U.S. territory.

Less than us. Less than Maryland. Less than Virginia or Oregon or Texas or Maine or Washington State. Yes, they are citizens but less—3½ million people are less. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all are created equal. Now, not all people ought to be U.S. citizens because of that comment, but all citizens ought to be equal. That

is why I am for D.C. statehood—700,000-plus people. Citizens. Our people.

They are franchised if they move to Maryland and disenfranchised if they move from Maryland to D.C. That is not right. We passed a bill to say that was not right. This is another opportunity to give the people of Puerto Rico the ability to set it right, and we make that decision.

The gentleman is correct. We don't have to give that right to Puerto Ricans, we make that decision, and we ought to make it. That is what this bill is about—making that decision to give our fellow citizens a choice—their choice, not our choice.

The gentlewoman from New York, a wonderful, dear, close friend of mine, she and I have disagreed through the years as to what that choice ought to be. But what we agree on is it is not our choice; it is Puerto Rico's choice. That is why I am proud to bring the Puerto Rico Status Act to the floor today.

This bipartisan legislation would organize and fund a binding, island-wide plebiscite that would allow the people of Puerto Rico to vote among these three options:

Statehood. That would be my option. If I were a Puerto Rican and I were living in Port-au-Prince or wherever I was living, I would vote to be a State. That is not my choice, I don't live there, I am not in Puerto Rico. San Juan—I said Port-au-Prince. San Juan. It ought to be their choice, and that is what this bill does—statehood.

Independence. They have a right to do that. They are either going to be a State or they will have a right to determine their own destiny, their own status, or as the bill also gives them an option to do, be a sovereign State with an association with our country.

Now, that has to be done through agreement because we have to make that decision as well as the Puerto Ricans. That would have to be an agreement between us, and both sides would have to be willing partners to that agreement.

Additionally, it would implement comprehensive, nonpartisan public-education campaigns to help voters understand the implications of each option long before any ballots are cast.

The gentlewoman from New York has made it an essential part of her argument that the people of Puerto Rico have to know what they are voting on and what the consequences of that vote will be. Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ has made that same point correctly.

This bipartisan bill also includes a variety of oversight measures to ensure that the election is secure, transparent, and fair.

I have long-believed that Puerto Ricans deserve the right to determine their political destiny. This is not a new concept for me. I don't think it is a new concept for any of us in this Congress. We believe in self-determination of peoples. We believe that dictators cannot impose upon people a govern-

ment they do not choose. That is bedrock belief for us. That is what this bill is about.

A group of House Members and senior Puerto Rican officials—I am honored that my former colleague and my dear friend is on the floor with us today, Pedro Pierluisi. The Governor has been selected by the people of Puerto Rico.

I am honored to be the friend of and ally of the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico who is the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, who has worked tirelessly with NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, with the rest of us, in ensuring that the people of Puerto Rico have an honest, fair choice available to them to affect their status, and to reach the long-sought consensus on a path forward for self-determination.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman GRIJALVA. This has been a long and torturous path because the disagreements about how we get to where we want to get are so difficult. Chairman GRIJALVA deserves great praise from all of us for his patience, for his knowledge, for his wisdom, for his role that he played in trying to bring this to a head. He has done it, it is here on this floor, and he is responsible for that.

Madam Speaker, I thank the members of the Natural Resources Committee on both sides of the aisle, and I thank the staff for the work that they have done—tireless hours and difficult discussions, debates, and so much disharmony from all those, both the diaspora and those in Puerto Rico—strong feelings that had to be brought to bear to reach this consensus.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairwoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ; Representative DARREN SOTO, who is on the floor and perhaps is going to speak after me; Representative ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ; the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner that I have spoken of, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN; and you, Governor.

Madam Speaker, the Governor and I have had the opportunity to work together when you were a Member of this House. We passed a bill that this House passed saying that the Puerto Rican people ought to have a choice, so this is not new. The previous gentleman wasn't here in Congress then—I don't know that, but I don't think he was. This is not new. This has not been done haphazardly. This has been done carefully with difficult efforts made by all parties.

All of the people that I mentioned, I thank for their efforts to reach this historic consensus and action on behalf of the people of Puerto Rico. We are all in agreement that the decision must belong to the people of Puerto Rico alone. Their destiny ought to be up to them.

The Puerto Rican Status Act, of which we will consider in just a few minutes, will give them that choice. They will have that choice only if we vote “yes.” If we do not vote “yes” today, I fear we may not vote “yes” for a very long time. The people of Puerto

Rico would be held in a status that I believe the majority of them do not want to be in.

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, ask all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to represent the values of America in this vote. The values that say to us that people have the inherent right to self-determination, not to have it imposed upon them by force or by dictate of the Congress of the United States, but to choose a status of their choosing, of their desire, of their vision. Vote for this status bill, it represents the best of American values. We have a moral responsibility to do so.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the distinguished gentleman, the leader of the Democratic Party, for his remarks. I agree with many things that he said. I think all of us would agree with many of the things that he stated. I was with him right up there until the part about using D.C. statehood as a metaphor with Puerto Rican statehood. If the gentleman wanted to talk about the residents of D.C., we can talk about taking those residential neighborhoods and commercial neighborhoods in D.C. and putting them back with the State of Maryland if that is an issue. D.C. statehood is totally different from Puerto Rican statehood, and it shouldn't even be brought into this discussion.

The gentleman talked about the inherent right to self-determination. He said it is something that shouldn't be dictated by the Congress of the U.S. to the people of Puerto Rico. He said the decision belongs to the people of Puerto Rico. Their destiny belongs to them. I think we would all agree with that in principle, but that is not what this bill says.

Section 102 talking about the independence option. I am reading directly from the bill: “The constitutional convention under section 101 shall formulate and draft a constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights . . .”

We all agree that should happen, but if they are an independent nation, what right do we have to tell them that? It says it shall include: “Due process and equal protection under the law; freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion; the rights of the accused; any other economic, social, and cultural rights as the constitutional convention may deem appropriate and necessary; and provisions to ensure that no individual born in the nation of Puerto Rico shall be stateless at birth.”

I don't disagree with that, but if they vote for independence, what right do we have to dictate to them how they write their constitution and what is included in it?

The other option of free association, section 202 of the bill: “The constitutional convention under section 201 shall formulate and draft a constitution for Puerto Rico that guarantees

the protection of fundamental human rights . . . ”

Again, if they have the sovereignty under a free association, what right does Congress have to dictate what their constitution will say? The leader's words that their destiny shouldn't be dictated by the U.S. Congress. Their destiny belongs to them. Yet, this bill tells them what they shall do if they vote for either of those options.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

□ 1145

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, today is a truly historic day for Puerto Rico. Ironically, it is also a perfect example of the island's colonial reality.

I am Puerto Rico's only voice in Congress. I represent 3.2 million American citizens living back home, more constituents than anyone in this Chamber. Yet, while we consider a bill I helped write, a bill that will directly impact the life of every citizen I represent, I still must rely and depend on everybody here because I cannot vote on the floor. This is the best example of why this bill is so important for Puerto Rico.

Today, Congress takes a step toward finally assuming its responsibility under Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of our Constitution to provide the people of Puerto Rico with an opportunity, a federally binding choice to democratically decide our future among three nonterritorial, constitutionally viable options: statehood, independence, and independence in association with the United States.

For the first time in history, we are considering legislation that would authorize a self-executing plebiscite on the island. With the adoption of this bill, this Chamber is also recognizing and making clear that Puerto Rico's century-old territorial status is the problem and cannot be part of the solution.

The territorial condition constrains the island's ability to prosper and has relegated the island to an indefinite second-class status when compared to the 50 States.

This is the main reason behind social, economic, and physical challenges we have faced, forcing a mass exodus of millions of Puerto Ricans to the mainland in search of that equality.

Congress has perpetuated by its inaction this dysfunctional political-economic condition, one that at its core is, as President Ronald Reagan once characterized it, “historically unnatural.”

Because we are a territory, the people of Puerto Rico lack full voting representation in the House and Senate and cannot vote for the President, who sends our sons and daughters to war.

Because we are a territory, the Federal Government can, and often does, treat us unequally under Federal laws and programs.

Because we are a territory, we are treated as second-class citizens.

Because we are a territory, I am here today discussing a bill related to one of our most critical issues, yet I cannot vote on this bill. This is the reason this discussion is so important.

I support statehood for the island, and our people have voted not once, not twice, but three times already supporting statehood.

In response, I introduced H.R. 1522, which, following the most recent precedents of Alaska and Hawaii, would have established a process to admit the island as a State of the Union in a simple yes or no vote. However, given the political realities in this Congress, and in the interest of advancing the status issue, I led negotiations on this bill before us.

This bill would make an offer to the people of Puerto Rico to choose. I prefer statehood, but this bill would allow the people to choose between statehood, independence, or independence in association with the United States, and spell out the consequences of each option.

Of course, this bill is not perfect, but at least it will advance the issue.

Today, I remember the late Congressman Don Young of Alaska, who understood better than anyone else the inequities that come with being a territory and always championed statehood for Puerto Rico.

Madam Speaker, never has a U.S. territory had to wait longer than Puerto Rico to become an independent nation or to become a State, and we have voted three times for that. We have more than earned the right to do so.

Today, as the sole representative of the people of the island, I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, H.R. 8393, and allow us to finally put an end to our shameful territorial status.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO), someone who, with other colleagues, worked through this difficult process and produced the consensus today.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, it is time to set our people free. After 124 years, it is past time for Americans in Puerto Rico to decide their own form of government.

The Puerto Rico Status Act will finally allow Puerto Ricans to throw off their colonial bonds, finally end their territorial status and choose for themselves: statehood, independence, and sovereignty with free association. What a historic day today is in the U.S. House of Representatives.

With the option of statehood, which is my preference, it is simple. Puerto Rico would become the 51st State in our Nation, with all the representation rights of our States.

With independence, they would become an independent nation, a sovereign free to decide their own future.

With sovereignty with free association, they would be an independent nation and would have the right to enter

into a compact, a contract between the United States and Puerto Rico that would provide for citizenship for a limited time, foreign policy agreements, among other matters.

The history of this bill this term is really important to discuss. We had two hearings that lasted a day each. We had bipartisan negotiations with the great leader on the Republican side, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, the very voice of the island of Puerto Rico, along with my colleagues NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, our great chairman here, and, of course, our leader.

It is bipartisan. Just to make sure, we had another nearly daylong hearing, meeting with stakeholders on the island after the draft was released.

Then, of course, we had a markup. That lasted all day. In fact, I can't think of a single bill that we have gotten out of the Natural Resources Committee that we spent more time on this term than this bill.

Of course, we see a long history of discrimination against territories, or excuses for why territories shouldn't become States.

With Texas, they said, “Could a nation become a State?” But they got in.

With New Mexico, they talked about a majority Hispanic native State. It took them nearly 70 years. They got in.

In Utah, there was religious discrimination. In Hawaii, it was a nation and a predominantly native island—Alaska, as well.

One by one, we admitted these territories as States based upon their desire to join the Union.

At this moment, I can't help but well up with emotion. I think about the brave, Borinqueneers, who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea. Puerto Ricans serve in our armed services to this day in greater numbers, in many instances, than States. Many died fighting for a country that organized them into segregated units, sent them there on orders of a Commander in Chief for whom they could not vote under our laws. Yet, as Puerto Ricans, as Americans, they did so proudly, sacrificing their lives for our freedom.

I think about my trips to Iraq and Afghanistan during the global war on terror. I can never forget traveling through the vast desert of Kuwait and, upon landing at an isolated base, there was the Puerto Rican flag flying in the middle of the desert. You have to wonder, what were they doing there? It is out of love of this country that they were there.

I was similarly welcomed by a Puerto Rican medical unit proudly serving in Afghanistan under constant threat of danger.

I think about those families I met after Hurricane Maria and the devastation caused there, the most deadly disaster in modern history. That was a watershed moment for so many of us. It just showed how fragile the rights of those on the island were, recovering from Puerto Rico's worst disaster, with Hurricane Maria.

I also think of my bisabuela, Altagracia Casanova. Born just after the turn of the 20th century, I met her for the first time when she was in her late eighties during my first trip to the island. I was only 3 years old. We developed a close relationship, and she ultimately lived to 96 years old.

Her life spanned nearly a century. All the while, she lived in a colonial territory as a second-class citizen in the greatest democracy in the world. What a tragedy. What an irony.

I think about my abuela, Sara Casanova, who would come to the mainland every summer to spend time with us, teach us the language and history, enjoy our native food and music, and familiarize us with our family's native culture.

She died right before my first successful primary to the Florida House of Representatives back in 2007. But before she passed, even with a fading memory, she read about the campaign in *La Prensa* and cried. She understood it was a historic moment for our family, a passing of the torch to the next generation.

I carry that torch into this Chamber, and I ask you all to support freedom for our family back on the island, just like we expect for every other American.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Mr. SMUCKER. Madam Speaker, I am especially grateful to the ranking member for allowing me 2 minutes because he knows I am rising in support of this bill.

I understand and completely agree with my friend, Mr. WESTERMAN, who is a dear friend and who does a wonderful job as ranking member on this committee. I understand his frustration with this process because this did come up quickly. There are a lot of unanswered questions about what this will mean, depending on what the Puerto Rican people will choose.

I agree with him when he said that America is a beacon of hope to the world, and it is a light to the world. I think that makes the case for why we should allow the Puerto Rican people to make their choice about their own future.

I have heard concerns on our side about economic issues, taking on debt. I think this bill will specifically address that. Puerto Rico, if it chooses to be a State, would keep the debt. I would argue the opposite. Puerto Rico has been a territory since 1898, with 3.2 million American citizens. We have not provided them every tool we possibly can to ensure they can be prosperous.

I have visited Puerto Rico. I have a large community in my district from Puerto Rico, who have family. I visited after the hurricane. I was grateful for the support that we were able to provide.

But let's give every tool that we possibly can, including full citizenship in the United States of America, if that is

what they choose, to be prosperous, to contribute to the American economy.

I think we can look at this as a net positive. It will be a net positive if, indeed, Puerto Rico chooses to become the 51st State.

Again, I am grateful for the work of the ranking member and the committee on this. It is not taken lightly to disagree with him on a particular issue. There will be other steps in this process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SMUCKER. There will be other steps in this process during which I hope some of those real, legitimate questions can be answered.

We should allow the Puerto Rican people to make their choice about their future. I know, certainly, the Puerto Rican population, who have families back in the community, this is what they are looking for. I am proud to stand with them and their family members if they have the opportunity to freely determine the future of their beloved island.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ), one of the principals that worked on this consensus.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Madam Speaker, before I begin today, I would like to express and begin my remarks by expressing solidarity with other U.S. colonies, colonized people, indigenous communities, and descendants of the enslaved.

Today represents a historic moment. While Puerto Rico is not the United States' only colony, it is its oldest. Today, for the first time in our Nation's history, the United States will acknowledge its role as a colonizing force and Puerto Rico's status as an extended colony.

The Puerto Rico Status Act begins a process for Boricuas to decide their own future.

In this bill, we have made historic and unprecedented gains. Never before have terms for independence and free association been so clearly defined, including ramifications for citizenship.

This bill excludes the current unsustainable colonial status. It clarifies that U.S. birthright citizenship and transmission of citizenship remain the same in any event of status selection.

□ 1200

It provides 10 years of compensatory finance in the event of free association, and it also includes an agreement to international election observers over the course of a plebiscite.

This bill has also achieved historic and unprecedented multiparty agreement on the island, including representatives from the Independence, Statehood, and Movimiento Victoria Parties. These gains are critically im-

portant to codify in precedent here in this House.

I also want to acknowledge, rightfully, some of the criticisms of what is not in this bill. It is not perfect. But we have fought tirelessly to expand the transparency where previously there was less, and there is still more to go. It does not address reparations. It does not address the issues of Act 20, PROMESA, and LUMA, but I am confident that in solidarity with movements on the island, we will solve these issues and achieve those victories, as well.

I also want to note that decolonization is more than a vote. It doesn't happen just with a vote. It is a social, political, cultural, economic, and psychological process that extends far beyond the floor of this House. That being said, the gains that are made here are a watershed moment.

I thank, first and foremost, my incredible mentor, Representative NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, who has fought for the people of Puerto Rico for her entire career and her entire life.

I thank our other colleagues: Chairman GRIJALVA for elevating this issue, Leader HOYER for making this a priority, as well as Resident Commissioner GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN.

I also thank grassroots advocacy organizations as well as our partners in the Independence, Free Association, and Statehood Parties. These gains are incredibly important, and they are a waypoint and a stepping stone for the future of our island. I think it sends a very strong message to all. For there to be any vote, prior to any vote, we hope that the energy of people both in the diaspora and on the island are here.

Lastly, but certainly not least, as we ring out a refrain that is said among people across the world and Puerto Ricans across the world: "Yo sí soy boricua, pa'que tu lo sepas," "I am Puerto Rican, so you know."

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arkansas has 12 minutes remaining.

The gentleman from Arizona has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

If there is one thing that I think has come out in this discussion is that there are problems with this bill. It is not a "perfect piece of legislation." It needs work done on it.

But we have to look at what the bill says. The way this bill is written, if it were to pass today, if it passes out of this House and it went through the process in the Senate, signed by the President, then we have abrogated all of our responsibilities and authority, because it doesn't come back to Congress for any kind of approval.

So both sides have agreed, in a bipartisan manner, that this bill has problems, yet we are voting on it today to

say, with problems, that is okay; we are just going to go ahead and move it through the process, even though we have all recognized that there are problems with the bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK).

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot about self-determination today, but let's put that to the smell test.

The options that the Democrats are presenting to the Puerto Rican people don't include the most obvious choice, to remain as a commonwealth. So if you prefer the status quo, you are completely out of luck. The Democrats have already decided you are not allowed to vote for that. That is not self-determination. That is rigging an election.

Now, if none of the three options the Democrats have chosen for you gets 50 percent, then there is a runoff, even if the option dropped was the clear second choice of voters. And a narrow, transient majority seems to be most likely, since the November 2020 plebiscite scored just 52.5 percent in favor of statehood, 47.5 percent opposed, with just 53 percent turning out to vote. Completely ignored is the right of all the American people to discuss and decide so momentous and irreversible a question as this.

Statehood would mean that in the next reapportionment, other States will lose a total of four seats in the House of Representatives in order to accommodate the Puerto Rican delegation.

Only about 20 percent of the population is fluent in English, which means that we would be admitting a State whose vast majority is isolated from the national political debate that is central to our democracy.

Nor will statehood solve Puerto Rico's economic problems. Residents would now have to pay all Federal income taxes from which they are currently exempt. The GAO estimates that would cost Puerto Rico 70 percent of its existing manufacturing base. There is not even a CBO estimate of the cost to American taxpayers of admitting a chronically mismanaged and utterly bankrupt State government.

The economy of Puerto Rico is expected to underperform the national economy, which is itself a disaster. For American taxpayers, it would mean a new State that has the lowest per capita income in the country and the largest per capita debt. Its labor participation rate is 40 percent, compared to 62 percent nationally. Forty-three percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Its academic performance would be the worst in the Nation.

So how does it benefit America to admit a State that would be the most indebted, uneducated, poorest, and least employed State in the Nation?

We don't get to consider that question, because under this bill, Congress gets no further say in the matter once

Puerto Rico has voted. That makes it a blanket abrogation of the responsibility of Congress to make these decisions in the best interest of all of the people of the United States.

Whichever of the three options is chosen would be automatically enacted without any further debate or decision by Congress. It hands the constitutional authority reserved for the welfare of the entire Nation to the hands of what would be a narrow and transient majority in Puerto Rico.

The only debate in Congress on Puerto Rican statehood is the debate that we are having right now, when the Nation is oblivious to the legislation or its implications. Our constituents will awaken across the country to the realization of a fait accompli that was quickly rushed through the very last days of session with no opportunity for national debate on the implications of making such a profound and permanent change in the fabric of our Nation. This is as cynical as it gets.

If the motion to recommit is adopted, I will introduce an amendment that will require the question to be returned to the House for a full national debate on such a momentous issue and require a two-thirds vote to assure a broad, bipartisan consensus.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD immediately prior to the vote on the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, the people of Puerto Rico deserve to live in dignity with the freedom to determine their future. That is why I rise in support of the Puerto Rico Status Act.

The act simply provides Puerto Ricans the opportunity to determine their future and choose whether statehood, independence, or sovereignty and free association makes the most sense for them.

Colleagues, I hope we can all agree that we all value basic human rights, and that means, like every American citizen, our Puerto Rican neighbors deserve true representation, equal rights, and everything that flows from that.

After Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017, boricuas in the Tampa Bay area came together to advocate for resources to rebuild the island. The disparate treatment became so plain at that time, but it has existed for decades, even as Puerto Ricans have given their life in service of America's freedom.

So it is time that the territorial status of Puerto Rico be reexamined. It is unsustainable and cannot continue. Puerto Ricans deserve the opportunity to have their say.

I thank Representatives VELÁZQUEZ, SOTO, OCASIO-CORTEZ, GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN,

Leader HOYER, and Chair GRIJALVA for crafting this landmark legislation for self-determination per the democratic values that we hold dear.

Vote for self-determination and freedom and democracy for everyone. I urge you to adopt this bill.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Our neighbors in Puerto Rico are American citizens. They are afforded the protections under the Constitution of the United States. I am from Arkansas. Arkansas was a territory at one time. There is a process for becoming a State.

The American citizens in Puerto Rico deserve the respect to have a process that has actually been thought out, that has been debated, and that gives them an opportunity to enter statehood in a way that is more common to the way other States have entered. This bill is not that. This bill has serious problems with it.

We are right here at the end of Congress. To me, this just looks like a political ploy as we are waiting to pass a massive spending bill before we go home for Christmas and start the new Congress.

Madam Speaker, in closing, it is obvious there is bipartisan support for Puerto Rican self-determination. That is not the issue. The issue is the process, and this is a bad process.

If this is so important to the majority, then I ask: Why today? Why today?

Less than 20 days before this Congress ends and Democrats transition to the minority, why bring this bill today?

Was there not time in the past 4 years to have hearings on this bill, to have other committees look at this bill?

But yesterday, we get notice of an emergency Rules Committee meeting to consider this bill that all of a sudden is so important, but it wasn't important, certainly not in this Congress. We didn't have a hearing on this bill. We had a markup, a markup without a hearing.

The committee spent more time talking about big cats. We had hearings on big cats, then we talked about Puerto Rican status. There are 10,000 big cats in the United States, and there are over 3 million Puerto Rican citizens.

That is why we are not supporting this bill today, and that is why it is disingenuous to bring it to the House less than 20 days before the end of this Congress when both sides have agreed that there are problems with the bill, problems that need to be worked out, but there is no recourse in this bill for Congress to have a second look at it.

We can't control the Senate, but I doubt very seriously the Senate is going to be taking up this bill. So that leads me to conclude that what we are doing here at the end of December, discussing Puerto Rican status, is simply just a political ploy on the backs of the

Puerto Rican citizens of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “no,” and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1215

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This has been a typical debate on Puerto Rico because the question of status and the question of decolonizing our relationship with the people of the island is a question that causes spirited debate. That is okay, but spirited debate with misinformation and hastily drawn conclusions is not the way to debate. We will leave that for another day.

The important point today is that this did not get parachuted at the last minute. This has been a difficult process for all involved, and, I might add, a bipartisan process, to bring one final resolution regardless of where the clock is in terms of this session. This is the time that this was completed.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of this, and I am urging a “yes” vote on the legislation.

There are two fundamental differences between ourselves and the minority on this. The intent of the bill is simple: that there be three options, all requiring a deliberate and informed decision by the people of the island.

The current status is not one of those three options. Why? Because the intent of this legislation is to allow the Puerto Rican people not to be colonized and be a colony. That is the decolonization part of the legislation.

The other part, although it has been the habit lately of people wanting not only to predict outcomes of elections but to guarantee outcomes of elections, contrary to that philosophy, this directs that the people of Puerto Rico make the decision and respect that decision.

Our identity as a Nation is built on the values that we are all here to support and respect. It is built on the rule of law. The people of Puerto Rico, as citizens of this Nation, must be extended the respect and the consideration that, since 1898, we have been the overseer of a colony in this country. We must extend them the opportunity to choose their path forward.

That is all it is. It is democratic; it is fair; and it is overdue.

Madam Speaker, I thank all the Members who worked on this—in particular, Representatives VELÁZQUEZ, SOTO, GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, and OCASIO-CORTEZ—for the difficult periods and times they went through in this process, and obviously Majority Leader HOYER for his insistence, his prodding, and, on occasion, his calmness to get us to this point.

I thank the staff on our committee: chief counsel, Luis Urbina; deputy chief counsel, Margarita Varela; policy aide, Ivan Robles; staff director, David Watkins; and director of our Office of Insular Affairs, Brian Modeste.

I also thank each and every one on Leader HOYER's staff: Trent Bauserman and Chris Bowman; also Renata Becabarragan on Ms. VELÁZQUEZ's staff; Gabriella Boffelli on Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN's staff; and Andrea Valdes on Mr. SOTO's staff for their hard work and dedication to getting us to this point today. Sometimes that kind of work is underappreciated. I acknowledge their work and thank them.

Madam Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8393—Puerto Rico Status Act, to provide a plebiscite to be held on November 5th, 2023, to resolve Puerto Rico's political status.

Throughout my decades of service in Congress, I have been an ardent and consistent supporter of the Puerto Rican peoples' right to self-determination.

I have stood alongside our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters on many legislative efforts that would empower them to choose the governance status of their preference, as is their right, both as American citizens and in accordance with their basic human rights.

The population of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is 3.19 million.

Puerto Ricans are the largest group of U.S. citizens with Hispanic heritage, and yet, are treated with only 2nd-class citizenship.

In fact, Puerto Ricans have been the largest body of U.S. citizens which do not enjoy the privileges usually accorded to citizenship, including voting representation in Congress and the right to vote in Presidential elections.

It is a widely held belief in Puerto Rico that the residents of the Commonwealth should be empowered to decide their own political status. The Commonwealth's status is an internal matter among the people of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has hosted 6 referendums on the topic of statehood, with the most recent being in November 2020. The results of that referendum were that 52.5 percent of the electorate voted for statehood.

It is obvious that the people of Puerto Rico want to change the way they are represented in their own governance and that of the United States Government.

During the referendum in 2012, 54 percent of voters agreed that they did not want to maintain their current method of governance.

The majority of those that did not want to maintain the status quo chose statehood as the alternative that they preferred.

While many of these referendums have been held and have told us what the people of Puerto Rico think, nothing has materialized as a result.

This is why it is essential that Congress allow a plebiscite to Puerto Rico to resolve its political status.

Voters in Puerto Rico should be provided with the opportunity to choose independence, sovereignty in free association with the United States, or statehood.

It is imperative that this voting process be fair and free of any disinformation, propaganda, or wrongdoing.

All voters should be provided with voting materials in both English and Spanish, and all voting campaigns should be dedicated to providing voters with educational materials related to the plebiscites and potential outcomes.

The Puerto Rico State Elections Commission shall ensure that any educational campaigns are non-partisan in nature and provide voters with accurate information that allow them to vote according to their best interests.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8393—Puerto Rico Status Act, so that the Commonwealth can decide what is best for its people.

All Americans deserve representation, and this bill provides Puerto Ricans the right to make that decision for themselves.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1519, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. McClintock of California moves to recommit the bill H.R. 8393 to the Committee on Natural Resources.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCCLINTOCK is as follows:

After section 11, insert the following:

SEC. 12. CONGRESSIONAL RATIFICATION REQUIRED.

The result of a plebiscite under section 4 may not be certified before the date on which the House of Representatives and the Senate approve, by a two-thirds majority vote, the result of the plebiscite.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XIX, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of H.R. 8393, if ordered, and passage of H.R. 1948.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 209, nays 217, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 528]

YEAS—209

Aderholt	Bilirakis	Carl
Allen	Bishop (NC)	Carter (GA)
Amodei	Boebert	Carter (TX)
Armstrong	Bost	Cawthorn
Arrington	Brady	Chabot
Babin	Brooks	Cline
Bacon	Buchanan	Cloud
Baird	Buck	Clyde
Balderson	Bucshon	Cole
Banks	Budd	Comer
Barr	Burchett	Conway
Bentz	Burgess	Crawford
Bergman	Calvert	Crenshaw
Bice (OK)	Cammack	Curtis
Biggs	Carey	Davidson

Davis, Rodney
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flood
Flores
Foxy
Franklin, C.
Franklin, C.
Fulcher
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garbarino
Garcia (CA)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Gonzales, Tony
Gonzalez (OH)
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harris
Harshbarger
Hartzler
Hern
Herrell
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Hollingsworth
Hudson

NAYS—217

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cheney
Cherfilus-
McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen

Huizenga
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Joyce (PA)
Katko
Keller
Kelly (PA)
Kim (CA)
Kinzinger
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
LaTurner
Lesko
Letlow
Long
Loudermilk
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Mace
Malliotakis
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCauley
McClain
McClintock
McHenry
Meijer
Meuser
Miller (IL)
Miller (WV)
Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (AL)
Moore (UT)
Mullin
Murphy (NC)
Nehls
Newhouse
Norman
Oberholte
Owens
Palazzo
Palmer

Pence
Perry
Pfluger
Posey
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Salazar
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sempolinski
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Spartz
Staubert
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Dyne
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zeldin

Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Manning
Matsui
McBath
McCollum
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mfume
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Newman
Norcross
O'Halloran
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Pallone
Panetta
Pappas
Pascarell
Payne
Peltola
Perlmutter

Hinson
Kelly (MS)

Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Pressley
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (WA)

NOT VOTING—4

McKinley
Wexton

□ 1258

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Messrs. CLEAVER, COURTNEY, Ms. STANSBURY, Messrs. PAYNE, BISHOP of Georgia, PANETTA, Ms. CRAIG, Messrs. CLYBURN, VEASEY, BOWMAN, Mses. CLARK of Massachusetts, SEWELL, DeBENE, Mrs. BUSTOS, Messrs. QUIGLEY, HIMES, Mrs. PELTOLA, Mses. TLAIB, and JACKSON LEE changed their vote from “yea” to “nay”.

Messrs. MULLIN, CLINE, JOHNSON of Ohio, FITZGERALD, BUCSHON, CRENSHAW, Ms. SALAZAR, Messrs. LAMALFA, STEUBE, and Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS changed their vote from “nay” to “yea”.

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Auchincloss
(Beyer)
Axne (Pappas)
Beatty (Neguse)
Bishop (NC)
(Hice (GA))
Boebert
(Donalds)
Brooks (Moore (AL))
Brown (MD)
(Evans)
Españat
(Correa)
Ferguson
(Gonzales,
Tony (TX))
Gaetz (Donalds)
Gallego (Beyer)
Gibbs (Smucker)
Gosar (Weber (TX))
Hartzler (Weber (TX))
Herrera Beutler
(Valadao)
Issa (Calvert)
Jackson (Van Dyne)
DelBene
(Schneider)

DesJarlais
(Fleischmann)
Dingell (Pappas)
Doyle, Michael
(Horsford)
Khanna (Pappas)
Kim (NJ)
(Pallone)
Kirkpatrick
(Pallone)
Krishnamoorthi
(Pappas)
LaHood (Kustoff)
Larson (CT)
(Pappas)
Lawrence
(Garcia (TX))
Lawson (FL)
(Evans)
Letlow (Moore (UT))
Levin (CA)
(Huffman)
Long
(Fleischmann)
Malliotakis
(Armstrong)
Maloney, Sean P.
(Beyer)
Meeks (Horsford)
Moulton (Trone)

Newman (Correa)
Norcross
(Pallone)
O'Halloran
(Pappas)
Omar (Beyer)
Palazzo
(Fleischmann)
Pascarell
(Pallone)
Phillips (Craig)
Pingree (Beyer)
Porter (Beyer)
Pressley
(Neguse)

Quigley
(Schneider)
Rice (SC) (Weber (TX))
Rush (Beyer)
Sewell
(Schneider)
Sherrill (Beyer)
Simpson
(Fulcher)
Sires (Pallone)
Spartz
(Harshbarger)
Speier (Garcia (TX))

Stevens (Craig)
Stewart (Owens)
Strickland
(Correa)
Suozy (Correa)
Tiffany
(Fitzgerald)
Titus (Pallone)
Trahan (Lynch)
Welch (Pallone)
Wilson (FL)
(Evans)
Wilson (SC)
(Timmons)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ). The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. CONWAY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 233, nays 191, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 529]

YEAS—233

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Bacon
Barragán
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cheney
Cherfilus-
McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Davis, Rodney
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett

Doyle, Michael
F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Españat
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Flores
Foster
Frankel, Lois
Gallego
Garamendi
Garbarino
Garcia (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Golden
Gomez
Gonzalez (OH)
Gonzalez,
Vicente
Gottheimer
Green, Al (TX)
Grijalva
Harder (CA)
Hayes
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Joyce (OH)
Kahele
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kim (NJ)
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster
Lamb
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee (CA)
Lee (NV)
Leger Fernandez

Levin (CA)
Levin (MI)
Lieu
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Luria
Lynch
Malinowski
Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Manning
Matsui
McBath
McCollum
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mfume
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Newhouse
Newman
Norcross
O'Halloran
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Pallone
Panetta
Pappas
Pascarell
Payne
Peltola
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Posey
Pressley
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scanlon

Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Spanberger

Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stevens
Strickland
Suoizzi
Swalwell
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan

Trone
Underwood
Upton
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wexton
Wild
Williams (GA)
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—191

Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Armstrong
Arrington
Babin
Balderson
Banks
Barr
Bentz
Bergman
Bice (OK)
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (NC)
Boebert
Bost
Brady
Brooks
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burchett
Burgess
Calvert
Cammack
Carey
Carl
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cawthorn
Chabot
Cline
Cloud
Clyde
Cole
Comer
Conway
Crawford
Crenshaw
Curtis
Davidson
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donalds
Duncan
Dunn
Ellzey
Emmer
Estes
Fallon
Feenstra
Ferguson
Finstad
Fischbach
Fitzgerald
Fleischmann
Flood
Franklin, C.
Scott
Fulcher
Gaetz
Gallagher

Garcia (CA)
Gibbs
Gimenez
Gohmert
Gonzales, Tony
Good (VA)
Gooden (TX)
Gosar
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green (TN)
Greene (GA)
Griffith
Grothman
Guest
Guthrie
Harris
Harshbarger
Hartzler
Hern
Herschel
Hice (GA)
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Issa
Jackson
Jacobs (NY)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson (SD)
Jordan
Joyce (PA)
Keller
Kelly (PA)
Kim (CA)
Kinzinger
Kustoff
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Latta
LaTurner
Lesko
Letlow
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Mace
Malliotakis
Mann
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClain
McClintock
McHenry
Meijer
Meuser
Miller (IL)
Miller (WV)

Miller-Meeks
Moolenaar
Mooney
Moore (AL)
Moore (UT)
Mullin
Murphy (NC)
Nehls
Norman
Oberholte
Owens
Palazzo
Palmer
Pence
Perry
Pfluger
Reschenthaler
Rice (SC)
Rodgers (WA)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rose
Rosendale
Rouzer
Roy
Rutherford
Schalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sempolinski
Sessions
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Spartz
Staubert
Steel
Stefanik
Steil
Steube
Stewart
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Tiffany
Timmons
Turner
Valadao
Van Drew
Van Duyn
Wagner
Walberg
Waltz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams (TX)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yakym
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—6

Baird
Foxx

Hinson
Kelly (MS)

Loudermilk
McKinley

□ 1312

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE
RESOLUTION 8, 117TH CONGRESS

Auchincloss
(Beyer)
Axne (Pappas)
Beatty (Neguse)
Bishop (NC)
(Hice (GA))
Boebert
(Donalds)
Brooks (Moore
(AL))
Brown (MD)
(Evans)
Bustos
(Schneider)
Butterfield
(Beyer)
Carter (LA)
(Horsford)
Cawthorn
(Donalds)
Cherfilus-
McCormick
(Brown (OH))
Cicilline
(Jayapal)
Cuellar (Correa)
DeFazio
(Pallone)
DelBene
(Schneider)
DesJarlais
(Fleischmann)
Dingell (Pappas)
Doyle, Michael
F. (Evans)
Duncan
(Williams
(TX))
Dunn (Salazar)
Escobar (Garcia
(TX))
Españillat
(Correa)
Ferguson
(Gonzales,
Tony (TX))

Gaetz (Donalds)
Gallego (Beyer)
Gibbs (Smucker)
Gosar (Weber
(TX))
Hartzler (Weber
(TX))
Herrera Beutler
(Valadao)
Issa (Calvert)
Jackson (Van
Duyn)
Jacobs (NY)
(Sempolinski)
Johnson (TX)
(Pallone)
Kelly (IL)
(Horsford)
Khanna (Pappas)
Kim (NJ)
(Pallone)
Kirkpatrick
(Pallone)
Krishnamoorthi
(Pappas)
LaHood (Kustoff)
Larson (CT)
(Harshbarger)
Pappas)
Lawrence
(Garcia (TX))
Lawson (FL)
(Evans)
Letlow (Moore
(UT))
Levin (CA)
Tiffany
(Huffman)
Long
(Fleischmann)
Malliotakis
(Armstrong)
Maloney, Sean P.
(Beyer)
Meeks (Horsford)
Moulton (Trone)
Newman (Correa)

Norcross
(Pallone)
O'Halleran
(Pappas)
Omar (Beyer)
Palazzo
(Fleischmann)
Pascarell
(Pallone)
Phillips (Craig)
Pingree (Beyer)
Porter (Beyer)
Pressley
(Neguse)
Quigley
(Schneider)
Rice (SC) (Weber
(TX))
Rush (Beyer)
Sewell
(Schneider)
Sherrill (Beyer)
Simpson
(Fulcher)
Sires (Pallone)
Spartz
(Harshbarger)
Speier (Garcia
(TX))
Stevens (Craig)
Stewart (Owens)
Strickland
(Correa)
Suoizzi (Correa)
Tiffany
(Fitzgerald)
Titus (Pallone)
Trahan (Lynch)
Welch (Pallone)
Wexton (Correa)
Wilson (FL)
(Evans)
Wilson (SC)
(Timmons)

TENTATIVE HOUSE SCHEDULE

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, to my colleagues, based upon the present information on the Senate timeline for passing the omnibus, the earliest the House is expected to meet is Wednesday with votes at 6:30 p.m.—that is the earliest—with the votes of the week postponed until 6:30 p.m.

The House is also expected to meet on Thursday, December 22, and will stay in session until the omnibus is completed.

If the Senate acts on the omnibus earlier in the week, Members will be given 24 hours—not the normal 72 hours—24 hours' notice to return to D.C. Members should expect the House to be in session for at least 2 legislative days next week.

The House will consider bills under suspension of the rules, and additional legislative items are possible. We all understand Christmas is Sunday and none of us want to be here, but all of us have a responsibility, obviously, to complete the business of funding the government of the United States of America, so we will be here.

We will not be here unless the Senate acts more quickly than we anticipate before Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., which will be the first votes. If it is later than that, you will also get notice. If it is earlier than that, you will get notice.

VA EMPLOYEE FAIRNESS ACT OF
2021

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 1948) to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargaining of employees in the Veterans Health Administration, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 219, nays 201, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 530]

YEAS—219

Adams
Aguilar
Allred
Auchincloss
Axne
Bacon
Barragan
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bourdeaux
Bowman
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brown (MD)
Brown (OH)
Brownley
Bush
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson
Carter (LA)
Cartwright
Case
Casten
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Cherfilus-
McCormick
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Craig
Crow
Cuellar
Davids (KS)
Davis, Danny K.
Dean
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael
F.
Escobar
Eshoo
Españillat
Evans
Fitzpatrick
Fletcher
Foster
Frankel, Lois
Gallego
Garamendi

Garcia (IL)
Garcia (TX)
Golden
Gomez
Gonzalez,
Vicente
Gottheimer
Green, Al (TX)
Grijalva
Harder (CA)
Hayes
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Horsford
Houlahan
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jacobs (CA)
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (TX)
Jones
Kahale
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kim (NJ)
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster
Lamb
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee (CA)
Lee (NV)
Leger Fernandez
Levin (CA)
Levin (MI)
Lieu
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Luria
Lynch
Malinowski
Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Manning
Matsui
McBath
McCollum
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mfume
Moore (WI)
Morelle
Moulton
Mrvan
Murphy (FL)
Nadler

Napolitano
Neal
Neguse
Newman
Norcross
O'Halleran
Ocasio-Cortez
Omar
Pallone
Pametta
Pappas
Pascarell
Payne
Perlmutter
Peters
Phillips
Pingree
Pocan
Porter
Pressley
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (NY)
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scanlon
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schrier
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Sewell
Sherman
Sherrill
Sires
Slotkin
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Soto
Spanberger
Speier
Stansbury
Stanton
Stevens
Strickland
Suoizzi
Swalwell
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tlaib
Tonko
Torres (CA)
Torres (NY)
Trahan
Trone
Underwood
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez